Software Technology Parks

1835. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATION and INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are planning to extend the Software Technology Parks of India scheme;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that large number of IT SEZs are in pipeline, where IT companies could relocate from Software Technology Parks of India (STPI); and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) The Software Technology Park (STP) Scheme is standing scheme as per the Handbook of Procedure Vol. I (updated as on 7th April 2006). However, tax holiday exemption under section 10A/10B available upto 31st March 2009.

(c) and (d) As per the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry out of the 234 valid formal approvals granted for Setting up SEZs in the country, 146 are Information Technology (IT)/ Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES)/ Electronics Hardware (EH) SEZs of which 37 have since been modified. Besides, in principle approval has been granted for 31 IT/ITES/EH SEZs. It may be pointed out that the Special Economic Zones Act, 2005 and the Special Economic Zones Rules 2006 does not allow for conversion of existing units to SEZs. An amendment to Section 10AA of the Income Tax Act has been proposed in the Finance Bill 2007 to restrict the corporate tax exemption to new units.

'Drop Calls' due to network congestion

1836. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether TRAI has informed Government that network congestion is leading to a large number of 'Drop Calls';

(b) whether it is a fact that at 526 places in the country, the congestion levels were above the permissible limit;

(c) whether it is also a fact that there is a very high percentage of failed connection at the Point of Interconnection (PoI);

(d) what are the reasons for telecom companies unfairly charging customs for 'Drop Calls'; and

(e) the steps proposed to avoid charging customers for failure of telecom companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Network congestion results in failure of calls but established calls are not dropped due to network congestion.

(b) and (c) As per the Point of Interconnections (PoI) congestion report issued by Telcom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), for the period October - December, 2006 the number of PoIs having congestion of more than 0.5% are: October 2006 - 526, November, 2005 - 497 and December 2006 - 389. Out of these, PoIs having congestion more than 40% are 66, 65 and 39 respectively.

(d) and (e) The charging is effected immediately on answering by the called party when call is estabied. All the calls are charged for the usages based on the duration of the calls and pulse rate in the subscribed plan. In the case of dropped calls the customer is charged for usage based on duration of the call and pulse rate in the subscribed plan.

Laws protecting rights of Dalits

1837. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that European Parliament on the Human Rights has passed a resolution to the effect that implementation of laws protecting the right of Dalits remain grossly inadequate, and that atrocities, untouchability, illiteracy, inequality of opportunity continue to blight the lives of Indian Dalits;

(b) whether Government have made any representation to the European body in this regard; and